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A SHORT

ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE AND DEATH

OF

NATHANAEL OTHEN,

Who was ſhot in *Dover* Caſtle, *October* 26, 1757.

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A

SHORT ACCOUNT, &c.

I Was born at *Ogham* in *Hampſhire*, of honeſt Parents, and when about thirteen Years old, went to Service to a Farmer near *Ogham* whom I ſerved faithfully for a Year. I was then for a Year and half poſtilion to the *Exeter* Stage-Coach. Afterwards I went up to *London*, and hired myſelf again, in the place of a poſtilion. It was here I was ſoon led into Drunkenneſs, and by that Means not long after into Lewdneſs. Leaving this place after ſix Months, I hired for another Year as a poſtilion, at the *White-Horſe* in *Piccadilly*. Here I got more Money, but could keep none, ſquandering it all away in Drink and Debauchery. My Miſtreſs reproving me for this, I was ſo inraged that I went and enter'd on board a privateer. I went down as far as *Exeter*, in my Way to *Plymouth*, in order to embark. But my Mind then changed: So I came back to *London*, and hired myſelf in the *Hay Market* as a ſecond Coachman. I ſoon quitted this place, and ſerved Lord *H*——— in the ſame Poſt for a Year and half, who when he wanted me no longer, recommended me to Col. *B*———, with whom I had large Wages. But I waſted all among lewd Women, till I embarked with my Maſter for *Holland*.

2. In eight Days we arrived at *Williamſtadt*. Thence we went to *Breda*, where I was again drawn into Drunkenneſs. My Maſter hearing of it, deſired the Groom to reprove me, which made me reflect on my paſt Life. I went out into the Fields, and went to prayer, repeating the prayers which I had been taught by my parents, and this

I did many times while we ſtaid at *Breda*: and I had more power over ſin than formerly.

3. We now removed to *Maeſtricht*. Soon after my maſter parted with the horſes I took care of, and recommended me to another maſter. But I ſtayed with him only a fortnight, before I relapſed into drunkenneſs, and was perſuaded to enliſt among the *Welch* Fuſileers, in the year 1748. I remained at camp till *Michaelmas*: thence we marched to *Radenburgh*, where I remained all the winter. On the firſt of *March*, 1748, we marched to *Ruremond*, where we incamped, though the weather was cold and the ſnow deep. After the ceſſation of arms, we removed from place to place, till in *November* we came to *Williamſtadt*.

4. Here we lay five weeks on board the *Seaflower*, a ſhip belonging to *Whitby*. On *December* 18, New Stile, we ſet ſail for *Burnt-Iſland*: our ſhip having 41 horſes on board. About ſun-riſe, juſt as we got over the bar, it looking as if we ſhould have hard weather, the man of war that ſailed with us prepared for it, backing his ſails, and making faſt his guns. Before we loſt ſight of land, we ſaw one of the tranſports break her yard. Soon after we came up along-ſide of a man of war, who adviſed us, to take in ſome of our ſails. But our Captain being headſtrong, did not regard him, but kept all his ſails ſet, except the main-top-gallant. About two hours before ſun-ſet, it blew a hurricane; and we having but few ſailors, before they were able to furl the ſails the wind tore them all in pieces. And it was well it did: for we lay gunnel too; ſo that had the ſails ſtood, we muſt have overſet. Suddenly a great outcry was made below, that the horſes were broke looſe. I ran down and found ſeven of them had broke looſe, which made all the reſt ſo wild, that we were obliged to kill them all, but one. But it was ſix days before we could get them overboard: during which the ſmell was ſo offenſive, that it made the whole ſhip's crew ſick. Two days after

we ſaw the ſhore ; but we could not poſſibly make it, the wind was ſo high. We then endeavoured to make *Aberdeen:* but were beat to ſea again. The next morning we loſt ſight of land, the weather continued as before for five days. The ſixth at day-break, we were ſuprized to ſee in the midſt of the ſea a rock very high out of the water. And the ſhip was almoſt upon it: ſo all hands were called. The Captain ſtanding on the deck, cried, "O my ſhip, my ſhip." Some of the ſoldiers curſed him for diſheartening them. He anſwered, "You need not ſwear and curſe. "For you may look over the ſide of the ſhip, and "ſee your graves." Many were then frighted, and ſome went to prayer. When we got to the lee ſide of the rock, we ſtrove to anchor; but the wind blew ſo hard, and the ſea was ſo rough, we could not. The ſhip was now taking in water apace, ſo that we had two foot of water in our hold already. Ten ſoldiers were employed, of whom I was one, to hale the water out with their camp-kettles. In a little while our ſteward periſhed with cold, as did the carpenter ſoon after. And ſeveral of the boys had their limbs frozen, ſo that they were unable to work. Eight ſoldiers who had been on board a man of war were ordered to ſupply their place.

5. The wind continued to blow hard at ſouth, which drove us on the coaſt of *Greenland.* We were now ſo far north that I believe we had not above four hours day-light. The Captain now came into the cabin, and cried, "Lord, have "mercy upon us! what ſhall we do? I am afraid "we ſhall be drove ſo far north, as to have no "day-light at all." Quickly after, he went out of his ſenſes, and was confined in his cabin. But juſt then the wind ſhifted from ſouth to north; and Lieutenant *Eyres,* underſtanding the theory of navigation, undertook the management of the ſhip. The 10th of *March* we came in ſight of a rocky coaſt, but knew not what land it was. We tried to take ſoundings; but could find no bottom,

a ſtrong current ran between the rocks which was againſt us: but the wind blew ſtrong for us. We hung out a flag of diſtreſs at our main-top-maſt, and fired ſeveral guns and ſeveral platoons.

6. During this diſtreſs moſt in the ſhip called upon God, and if any man ſpoke profanely, he was reproved for it. At the ſame time, a thought came into the minds of many, that there were ſome grievous ſinners in the ſhip: and all agreed to caſt lots, that they might find the man, for whoſe ſake this was come upon us. But they did not execute what they had agreed. Here we remained five days. One who had been a ſailor then ſwore, that it was the *Orkneys* we ſaw, and undertook to bring us ſafe in. But we had not gone far, before our paſſage was quite ſhut up, and we were juſt upon the rocks. In the morning a man was ſent to the main-top-maſt head, and ordered to keep a good look out. Before twelve he cried, "A boat a-head." Our boat was quickly manned in order to row to them. In a ſhort time they came on board: they brought us into the harbour about ſun-ſet. Here we remained, till we had liberty from the king of *Denmark*, to come to *North Bergen* in *Norway*. When we came thither, ſeveral loſt the uſe of their limbs, and many died in an hoſpital erected for us. Here we continued a month. Having then repaired our ſhip, and got a new Captain, (for the old one was ſtill diſordered) we ſet ſail for *Scotland*, intending for *Burnt-Iſland*, which we hoped to reach in a ſhort time.

7. But we had ſcarce loſt ſight of land two hours, when another violent ſtorm aroſe. I then renewed the good reſolutions I made in the laſt, and which I forgot almoſt as ſoon as I had made them. It blew exceeding hard; however on *April* 6, we came with great difficulty to *Leith*. When we were ſafe on ſhore, inſtead of returning God thanks, I ſoon fell to my old trade of drunkenneſs: And during our ſeveral removes, I continually plunged deeper and deeper into all manner of wickedneſs.

3. After being at ſeveral other places we marched to *Glaſgow*, were I met whith a ſober woman and one that feared God, whom I married, and lived comfortably with till orders came for my remove to *England*. We paſt the winter at *Dover*, where the advice of my wife made ſuch an impreſſion upon me, that I began to take up, and be a good huſband, and worked hard to maintain myſelf and her. So I continued to do at *Exeter* where I had a ſon born and ſtayed eleven months. Thence we marched to *Plymouth*, where we embarked for *Minorca*. We landed there *May* 25, and I lived happy with my wife for two months. Then both ſhe and my child were taken ſick and died. This was a loſs indeed! I believe if ſhe had lived, it would have been the ſaving of my life.

6. After her death I ſoon fell back to drunkenneſs, and to ſupply the expence of it, took to coining. The next ſpring, *April* 20, the *French* inveſted the caſtle of St. *Philip*. Toward the end of the ſiege, my companion and I got drunk together and quarreled: upon which he theatened to inform againſt me, for which a great reward was offered. Being ſoon after told, that he was gone to give information, I thought there was but one way to ſave my life. So I and he that told me, determined to deſert together. In getting out of the caſtle, I fell into the ſea, and was very near being drowned. With much difficulty we then got to an old houſe, and took ſhelter therein. But we were between the fire of the *French* and the *Engliſh*; ſo we ſtayed not above a quarter of an hour. I would now fain have returned; but our caſe was deſperate: ſo we went on hand in hand. As we advanced, the *French* gave the ſignal, which was three ſlaps with their hand on their cartouch-box. As we did not anſwer it, or ſpeak, (for neither of us could ſpeak *French*) they immediately fired upon us. But here alſo the hand of God was over us. The ſhot all flew over our heads. They then came and took us to the com-

manding officer, who ſent us to the town as priſoners. In the morning we were removed to a priſon near one of the general's quarters, who ſent for us about noon, and aſked, What our deſign was? I anſwered, It was our deſire to go into *France* and work. He ſaid, "This could not be "allowed by any means, unleſs I firſt ſerved in "the army for three years." I ſaid, I would "only comply, on condition I ſhould not ſerve on the iſland. He replied, If I would not ſerve on the iſland I muſt go back to priſon. I was going, but he called me back and aſked, "In what re-"giment in *France* would you like to ſerve?" I anſwered, In *Fitz James's*. He ſaid, I ſhould. However for the preſent, I was remanded to priſon. Two days after I was carried before the Duke *de Richlieu*, who aſked me many queſtions. But I continued a priſoner during the whole ſiege, and was ſo, till we came to *Valenciennes*.

10. Here I was enliſted into *Fitz-James's* horſe, and continued two months; but with an aking heart. I longed to be in *England* again, and only waited for an opportunity. This was ſuſpected: ſo that when we marched hence, I was confined every night, till we got a great way into *France*. By interceeding with the quarter-maſter, I then got my liberty. After many removes, we marched to *Hanau*, and from thence about thirty leagues toward *Muſcovy*. Here four of us agreed to deſert the next night, and make the beſt of our way to the Duke of *Cumberland's* army. At eleven we ſet out in thunder, lightning and rain. We took each of us a brace of piſtols, with our ſwords, and plenty of powder and ball. With great difficulty we paſt the guards, and then not knowing the roads, quickly loſt our way: ſo that at break of day, we had got but nine miles. However we were now got into the right road: but day-light approaching, we went into a wood and ſtayed there till ſix in the evening: having been all this time without victuals, we were weak and faint; however we walked all night. In the

morning we learned from a waggoner, that a party of *French* horſe were within a mile and a half of us. We aſked, What he thought they came there for? He ſaid, He knew not: unleſs it was to look for deſerters. Upon this, finding no way to get to the Duke, we agreed to make for *Holland*, having changed our cloaths with ſome of the boors, who likewiſe behaved kindly to us, or we muſt have periſhed.

11. Having ſold our arms to buy us proviſions, after many difficulties and dangers, in paſſing by both the *French* and *Imperial* troops, we at length came to *Maeſtrichte*. Thence we went to *Middleburgh*, and afterward to *Fluſhing*, where we got on board an *Engliſh* man of war, which the next morning ſailed, and brought us into the *Downs*. The third day after we landed, we were apprehended as deſerters, and laid in irons for ſix days. We were then removed to *Brumpton* camp, near *Chatham*, where I was tried by a court martial, for deſerting from the caſtle of St. *Philip*, which I acknowledged, and was condemned to die

12. I now began to be in great trouble, not knowing what to do. At length my companion and I determined to lay violent hands on ourſelves. In this reſolution I continued till night. Then I began to think on the conſequences of ſelf-murder. Betimes in the morning I went to prayer, and continued praying till about ten o'clock. In my diſtreſs I bethought me of one *James Harbuckle*, a drummer in our regiment. When he came, I told him of my condition, and he began to talk to me of the love of Chriſt to ſinners; of repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. In the evening he was obliged to go; but he promiſed to ſend ſome of his brethren to me. Two of them came at night, and explained more at large what *James Harbuckle* had ſaid. From this time I found another kind of trouble: my ſins were ſo ſet in array againſt me, that not an evil work or word or thought I had ever given way to but was brought to my remembrance. Yet I was

not ſo much troubled for fear of hell, as for grief that I had offended ſo good a God, and had crucified the Son of God afreſh. For three days and three nights my diſtreſs was ſo great, that it was as if all my fleſh was tearing off my bones, and my bones breaking in pieces, which made me often look at my hands and legs, to ſee if it was not ſo.

13. My load ſo increaſed, that I was juſt ready to deſpair of mercy, when on a ſudden it all dropt off. I was on my knees at prayer, when in a moment all my fear was gone. I knew, I had redemption in the blood of Chriſt, the forgiveneſs of my ſins; and the love of God was ſhed abroad in my heart, enabling me to love all mankind, even my enemies, and him in particular who had been the cauſe of my deſerting. And I had an earneſt deſire to ſee and tell him ſo. And I found every day an increaſe in love, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. I was ſo delivered from the fear of death, that I could have rejoiced to have died that inſtant; being filled with prayer and praiſe and thankſgiving, ſuch as no tongue can expreſs. And this ſenſe of the love of God to my ſoul, I never ſince loſt, not for a moment.

14. I was moved from hence to *Dover*-Caſtle, where I ſent for Mr. *Edwards*, the Miniſter of St. *Mary's*. He came the next morning, and afterwards attended me very diligently. I deſire to thank God for his help, and hope the Lord will bleſs him for his kindneſs to me. But I could not be ſatisfied, till I ſent into the town to enquire, If there were any of the people called *Methodiſts* there? They ſent word, they would come when their day's work was done: but it being then late, they could not be admitted. On *Sunday* they came again, and we prayed, and ſang, and rejoiced together in the ſalvation of God. I deſired they would come again if I was ſpared, which they did the following *Sunday*, when my ſpirit was ſo revived, that I could not help declaring to my fellow-ſoldiers, what God had done for my ſoul. And now my priſon was turned into a church, an houſe of praiſe and

prayer. People crowded in, ſoldiers and others, to whom Mr. *W*——— gave an exhortation. When he had done, I ſtood up, and begged my fellow-ſoldiers, to cry to God for mercy, and grace to forſake all their ſins, leſt the day of grace ſhould be paſt, and they be given over to a reprobate mind.

15. I ſpent the remaining part of the day in giving a relation of my life, to one who wrote it down from my mouth: but I could not finiſh it then. *Monday, Oct.* 23, Mr. *Edwards* adminiſtered the Lord's ſupper to me. In the afternoon Mr. *W*—— gave another exhortation, as I did likewiſe when he had done, and we ſang praiſes to God with a good courage, and poured out our ſouls in prayer. The ſoldier who had threatened to inform againſt me at St. *Phillip*'s now came in. Formerly I was reſolved to kill him, wherever I met him: but I now felt nothing but love and pity. So I earneſtly exhorted him to forſake his ſins, and ſeek mercy while it might be found.

16. What follows is added by him who wrote the foregoing relation. "We now parted, after I had promiſed to be with him, during the ſhort remainder of his life, as much as my buſineſs would permit. *Tueſday* the 25th Mr. *Edwards* adminiſtred the ſacrament to him, and examined him cloſely as to the ſtate of his ſoul. He readily anſwered every queſtion, and declared his deſire to depart and be with Chriſt. About ten at night I came to him again, and found him employed in exhorting his fellow-ſoldiers, and in praiſe and prayer. In the ſame employment he had been the greateſt part of the day. In the ſame he continued till about twelve: when his ſtrength being quite exhauſted, he was forced to take ſome reſt. He would fain have ſlept on his coffin: but we perſuaded him to lie on the ſtraw: when he waked he aſked, What o'clock it was? And being anſwered "About three," he complained, that he had ſlept too long; but found himſelf much refreſhed. After Mr. *W*—— had read and expounded a chapter, and ſpent ſome time in prayer and praiſe, he again ex-

horted his fellow ſoldiers, to forſake their ſins, particularly thoſe to which he knew they were addicted.

17. The morning now advancing, he expreſt much longing for the happy hour, when he was to "put on, as he called it, his wedding-dreſs," and to be with the Lord. We then left him a while, and when we returned, found him dreſt in white, ſtanding on a long form, and exhorting all the people. We all joined in prayer, after which he broke out in praiſe to God his Saviour. Mr. *Edwards* coming in, aſked, how he did? He anſwered, "Bleſſed be God, never happier." After a few more queſtions he withdrew, and *Othen* getting on the form again, exhorted all that were preſent with ſuch joy and fervency of ſpirit, as teſtified a hope full of immortality.

18. He was thus employed, when the officer came to tell him, the time was come: he then chearfully ſtept off the bench, and without any delay went forward, and ſaid, "I had a good wife, and I loved her well: but I now go forth with greater pleaſure to die, than I did on my wedding day, to be married." When he was out of priſon and delivered to the ſoldiers who were to guard him to the place of execution, he began ſinging that hymn with a loud voice,

"Behold the Saviour of mankind,
"Nail'd to the ſhameful tree!"

Walking on, he took notice of a company of young ſoldiers, to whom he earneſtly ſaid, "Take warning by me. I am young; but 27 years of age in full health and ſtrength. And yet I ſhall ſoon be as water ſpilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up. My morning ſun goes down at one o'clock. Yet I have found mercy: And ſo may you. O that you ſaw the danger of being out of Chriſt! If you felt this in the manner I felt it, eſpecially for three days and three nights, it would make the ſtouteſt of you tremble."

19. Then turning to me and ſome others who walked near him, he ſaid, "Come, which of you will help me to ſing?" On which he gave out his

favourite hymn (that on the crucifixion) and we all ſang it with him. When he came to the ſpot where he was to ſuffer, the miniſter was ready to pray with him, in which we all joined. Afterward the officer gave him liberty to go round, and exhort all the ſoldiers. He began at the right and ended at the left, ſparing neither officers not private men: though to ſome he ſpoke more particularly, and in a manner which I truſt they will never forget. He then aſked the ſerjeant if the Major thought him too long? He ſaid, No: upon which he gave out, The Lamentation of a Sinner. While we were ſinging, the men were drawn out that were to ſhoot him, and ſtood a little behind him. He turned and looked upon them, and Mr. *W*—— aſked him, "Whether he felt any fear of death?" He ſaid, "None at all, bleſſed be God: I feel my faith ſtronger and ſtronger." Here we all took our laſt farewel of him, and parted with a kiſs of love. He then chearfully walked to the mark, kneeled down, and having commended his ſoul to God, gave the ſignal. In that inſtant, his body pitched forward, and his ſoul ſprang into eternity.

20. Some of our friends told the Serjeant, That if it was agreeable to the Major, Mr. *W*—— would preach a ſermon on the occaſion. The offer was readily accepted. So in the afternoon he ſtood near the place of execution, and all the ſoldiers were ordered out, and formed a ring round about him. The officers as well as ſoldiers were preſent, and behaved with the utmoſt ſerioufneſs.

As I was coming back, a ſoldier ſaid to the people, "If I was as well prepared for death, as *Othen*, I did not care if I was to be carried up to the green and ſhot this moment."

Another ſaid, "I was ſo prejudiced againſt him by reports, that I would have ſhot him, as ſoon as I would a dog. And I waited at the priſon door, expecting to ſee a monſtrous creature, when I ſaw a man with grace ſhining in his face. And I hope what I then ſaw and heard will be a bleſſing to me as long as I live."

F I N I S.